



# Corporate Plan

**2024 - 2030**

**Rewiring the economy**

**ZERO  
WASTE  
SCOTLAND**

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## Zero Waste Scotland Corporate Plan 2024 - 2030

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### Tackling textile waste

In Scotland, disposed clothing and household textiles - like curtains and bedding - contribute to 4% of household waste by weight and account for 32% of household waste carbon emissions. Zero Waste Scotland collaborated with street artist, The Rebel Bear, to bring to life the evidence of our Carbon Metric report, creating metaphoric artworks in Dundee and Glasgow.

## As a society, we consume far more than the planet can sustain.

It's a global problem that's driven by our global economy which is based on a 'take, make, waste' approach involving extraction, production, consumption, and discarding of products and materials after use. This often leads to waste and environmental harm.

According to the latest analysis by the United Nations' International Resource Panel, globally, the extraction and processing of material resources account for 55% of greenhouse gas emissions, 40% of particulate matter in our air, and 90% of total land use related biodiversity loss.

For Scotland, our economy requires the equivalent of 22 tonnes of materials, per person, per year - almost three times the sustainable consumption level established by scientists.

### The circular economy is the best tool we have to turn this around, while maintaining a high quality of life.

It can help us recognise the value of the products and materials we use and keep them in high-value use for longer. At its heart, the circular economy is based on three principles - using less, using longer, and using again - all of which will reduce costs, grow the economy, and accelerate a wellbeing economy that's fairer and healthier, as well as more sustainable.

Despite Scotland being seen as a pioneer in adopting more circular practices, our economy is only 1.3% circular. Circular business models and circular purchasing remain at the fringes of our economic ecosystem. The challenge now is to rewire the economic system. Away from one based on linearity to one which fully embraces circularity.

This Corporate Plan outlines how we will support that vision over the next five years, driving progress towards the sustainable Scotland we all want to see.

# 1 Scottish Government Ministerial Statement

**The breakdown of our climate is happening at a speed we can no longer simply ignore or hope will fix itself. The climate crisis is here and it is impacting us all.**

Increasingly, we are seeing the devastating impacts from climate change, and these examples are happening on our doorsteps more than ever before.

The situation is compounded by increases in biodiversity loss, water stress and levels of pollution.

Resource use is the biggest driving factor behind the climate and nature emergencies. It is well documented that Scotland's resource consumption is unsustainably high, with impacts reaching far beyond our shores.

**However, with the widespread adoption of circular practices, we know we can significantly reduce Scotland's consumption of raw materials.**

Changing the flow of materials, focusing on remanufacturing, reuse, repair, reprocessing and recycling across all parts of the economy is the right thing to do not just for our environment but for our wider economy too.

That's why the passing of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act earlier this year is so important. It gives Local Authorities and the Scottish Government the powers needed to support the sustainable use of resources and cut greenhouse gas emissions. It will lead

to the development and implementation of a clear strategy with targets and monitoring framework consistent with our ambitions to shift Scotland's economy to one which values our resources, makes more of what we already have and reduces the wasting of things once they come to the end of their life.

We have already seen innovation across Scotland in this space, with businesses and communities turning what we might otherwise throw away into valuable new products and services. This in turn, provides new market opportunities, allows people to make different choices and reduces overconsumption. There is also compelling evidence that such activity will also help grow our economy and benefit our communities, whilst also supporting businesses to be more resilient and sustainable in the long term.

Zero Waste Scotland has been at the forefront of this work both here in Scotland and abroad and will remain a driving force as a newly established public body helping all of Scotland towards a sustainable, circular future. The ambition set out in their Corporate Plan is bold and exciting. I am convinced that realising this ambition will allow Scotland to lead the way to a world that reduces overconsumption and waste.



**Gillian Martin MSP**  
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy

## MiAlgae

Marrying the whisky and salmon industries together, MiAlgae grows microalgae rich in Omega-3 (which comes from algae found in fish oil), taking the co-products from whisky distillation, that are often underutilised, and applying revolutionary biology. By cutting out the feeding of algae-rich food to fish, giving suppliers a direct food source, MiAlgae has helped the environment and created a vibrant circular process to benefit its whole supply chain and improve food security.



## 2 CEO & Chair Statement

**Tennent's**  
Tennent's has cut out single-use plastics, switching to cardboard and eliminating 150 tonnes of plastic as a result. Tennent's captures CO<sub>2</sub> from fermentation for its beer, achieving 95% CO<sub>2</sub> self-sufficiency and reducing atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> by 4,000 tonnes each year. Its anaerobic digestion plant processes brewery wastewater, producing biogas for heating, and lowering its carbon footprint.

### We're in the midst of a global ecological crisis. There's no avoiding this fact.

More and more, the global economy relies on materials from virgin sources. In the past six years alone, the global economy has extracted and used almost as many materials as over the course of the entire 20th century.

This unrestrained consumption has pushed planetary boundaries beyond their limits, leading to heightened climate change, biodiversity loss, increased water stress, and rising pollution levels. We need to bring human activity back within the safe limits of the planet by reducing extraction, maximising the use of existing materials, and creating a more equal and just society for all.

### We need to act now.

In Scotland, the challenge is even more stark as our economy's consumption of materials is nearly three times the sustainable level set by scientists.

Shifting the dial is, of course, a mammoth undertaking, but it's a challenge Zero Waste

Scotland has always been resolved to take on. We know we must embed circular practices into business models and everyday life. To achieve this, we need to rebalance the economic system in favour of a more 'circular' approach to resource use.

### At the heart of this 'rewiring' is a need for greater awareness as to the impact that our current 'take, make, waste' culture truly has on the environment, and of the benefits that a more circular approach could bring in tackling wider societal inequalities, both here in Scotland and around the world.

Businesses are key to the change we want to see, but they are constrained by the linear system in which they operate. Therefore, there is an urgent need to create a more supportive business ecosystem by restructuring the current finance, skills, infrastructure, innovation and governance landscape, to mainstream the adoption of circular practices.

We know where the high impact opportunities

lie, so it's crucial to optimise and target support where it will make a transformative change. A key driver for this change is aligning the flow of materials and products, both in and out of the circular system, ensuring widespread access to services such as reuse, repair, and reprocessing.

To do this, we need to be disruptive, focused, and unapologetic in our ambition. Our corporate plan is a dynamic blueprint that outlines our bold strategic vision for Scotland's economy and details the steps our organisation will take to achieve this vital transformation.

Through collective action, and visionary leadership, we can harness the power of economic change, underpinned by circular strategies, to create a world where prosperity thrives within planetary boundaries. Safe to say, the next five years are sure to be our most determined and exciting yet!

**Iain Gulland**  
Chief Executive, Zero Waste Scotland

**Dominic Fry**  
Chair of the Zero Waste Scotland Board

# 3 Our plan on a page

In line with scientific evidence, we need to bring human activity back within the safe limits of the planet by reducing raw material extraction - making more of the materials we already have and creating a more equal, and just, society for all.

## Our aim:

Rewire Scotland's economic system to drive a reduction of our consumption of natural resources through increased circularity and zero waste.

## Our focus:

Our Corporate Plan - increase circularity and ensure it becomes central to our future economic system.

- Evidence-led, highlighting the needs, means, and benefits of change socially, economically, and environmentally.
- Maximising our reach by enabling easy access to information, insight, and solutions.
- Systems transformation for the greatest impact.
- Retaining and attracting a talented, diverse, and inclusive workforce.
- Working in partnership as our principal means of delivery.

## What we do:



### Help people care

We encourage and advocate for change, by informing why we must reduce overconsumption of natural resources and demonstrating how we can do it.



### Make circularity easier

We identify and implement the conditions required to enable circular economies to flourish across Scotland.



### Do more where it matters most

We inform and support accelerated change in key sectors that require high levels of raw materials.



### Improve infrastructure

We evidence and demonstrate the right infrastructure to keep materials in constant use in Scotland's economy.

## 2030 target We'll be successful when:

- We have increased society's demand for circular systems to end overconsumption.
- We have embedded circular economy principles within national and local economic strategies, legislation, and policies to support wide scale economic change.
- We have implemented circular economy strategies, principles, and practices in high-impact sectors.
- We have created new valuable markets to optimise materials management and processing in Scotland.

## Future target We'll be successful when:

- We have reduced Scotland's extraction of raw materials by one third.
- The Scottish economy is underpinned by innovation and skills driven by circular principles, placing us at the forefront of developed economies.

## 4 Our plan in context

### 4.1 Who we are

Since our establishment in 2014, Zero Waste Scotland has been the primary driving force behind Scotland's transition to an economy based on circular principles.

Since the launch of the Scottish Government's pioneering Circular Economy Strategy in 2016, we have trailblazed the path to system change by showcasing, through an expansive

range of projects and programmes, that embedding circular practices is as possible as it is essential.

Delivering significant investment and support to over 300+ circular businesses through the pioneering Circular Economy Investment Fund (CEIF) and the Circular Economy Business Support (CEBS) service - both made possible in part thanks to the European Regional Development Fund.

Producing the first ever Scottish Material Flow Accounts (MFA) and co-authoring Scotland's first Circularity Gap Report to understand the size of Scotland's material footprint and increase the transparency of our overconsumption challenge.

Forging proactive partnerships with various Chambers of Commerce, as well as local and regional agencies, to increase reach, identify opportunities, and build capacity for change.

Delivering high profile, and award winning, public-facing campaigns, illustrating the impact of our overconsumption and throw away behaviour - including the 'Turning the Lens on Food Waste' campaign, in partnership with Rankin, and the 'Carbon Impact of Fashion' campaign with Rebel Bear.

Evidencing and supporting Government policy - such as the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act and the associated Scotland's Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030 - as well as National Planning Framework 4 and the Net Zero Public Bodies Building Standard.

### Renewable Parts

Renewable Parts is a leader in supply chain and refurbishment services for the wind energy sector, promoting a circular economy by restoring wind turbine parts at its Innovation Centre. Since 2018, their refurbishment efforts have prevented approximately 198 tonnes of material from reaching landfills, creating flexible and responsive Scottish supply chains.

From this solid foundation of knowledge and expertise, we are in a great position to refocus our work on creating the necessary conditions

to help usher in a more sustainable and resilient economy - built on circular principles for the benefit of all.



Our new status as an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body further cements our role in supporting, directing, and enabling progress towards implementing more circular solutions in both the public and private sectors. We will continue to provide evidence based independent, yet intentional, and focused expertise.



The Environment Strategy for Scotland sets out a clear objective to achieve a net zero, circular economy which will be inclusive and sustainable - providing opportunities for all to prosper. It reaffirms the goal of reducing the global impact of Scotland's consumption, whilst fostering a thriving economy that ensures wellbeing for our people and our planet.



With the development of a statutory Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland, the roll out of Scotland's Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030, and the passing of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024, circular principles and practices will become more embedded across all parts of the Government agenda.



We will work across the Scottish Government and with all local authorities, enterprise agencies, and other public bodies, to explore and integrate circular approaches and solutions into Scotland's cross-governmental response to the climate crisis. This effort extends to enhancing our broader economy and social policies to secure a fairer, more equal, and sustainable country for all.

## 4.2 Background to our plan

Our work to date has led us to recognise four key challenges Scotland faces when it comes to fully embracing a new economic model. One that incentivises the sustainable use of resources and tackles overconsumption.

### Need to help people care

Across businesses, people, and policymakers, there remains a widespread misunderstanding of the impact that our current 'take, make, waste' culture has on the environment and the economy. Increased evidence and analysis of the impacts of the current linear system will be pivotal in securing greater engagement.

### Need to make circularity easier

Many businesses find it extremely difficult to scale their new circular models and compete, effectively, in our current linear economy. This lack of a supportive ecosystem to incentivise businesses to operate with circular principles hampers sustainable growth across the economy. There is a clear need to 'rebalance' the business landscape to favour more circular economic practices and to foster a culture that supports greater adoption, traction, and, ultimately, growth of circularity..

### Need to do more where it matters most

Our evidence has identified several high-impact sectors and territories that present huge opportunities for economic system change. Factors driving this transformation include carbon reduction, economic benefits, material security, and supply chain transparency. To ensure the success of this transformation, there is a critical need for more optimised and targeted support.

### Need to improve infrastructure

For all of us to embrace the changes our economy needs to make, they must be fully available and accessible. This can only be done through widespread access to services such as reuse, repair, and reprocessing.



### EGG Lighting

EGG Lighting adopts a products-as-a-service (PAAS) and circular design model, focusing on creating durable light fittings. Customers pay for a sustainable lighting service instead of owning the fittings. This approach promotes repair over disposal, significantly reducing waste. EGG also refurbishes, repurchases and remanufactures components, emphasising their commitment to sustainability and product longevity. In the last two years, EGG has reused over 1000 products, and in so doing, kept 3.6 tonnes of materials in circulation, preventing the equivalent of 60 tonnes of carbon dioxide.



## 5 Our strategy

**Our new plan is a rallying cry for Scotland to go even further and faster, with greater focus and determination, to ensure our future economy is in balance with the Earth's natural systems.**

Rewiring the economic system is our only choice.

Scotland has the potential to be a global leader in systemic change - and Zero Waste Scotland's strategy is to provide the knowledge that will optimise the value

of resources flowing into, and out of, the economy.

We will focus on tackling the systemic barriers inhibiting the economy's ability to change and take a system wide approach to help circular strategies to prosper.

To achieve this, we will provide expert leadership, empowering and facilitating others to embed regenerative resource practices across the economy.

The tactics we will use to bring about change fit within the themes of:



### Help people care

We encourage, and advocate for, change, by informing why we must reduce overconsumption of natural resources and demonstrating how we can do it.



### Make circularity easier

We identify, and implement, the conditions required to enable circular economies to flourish across Scotland.



### Do more where it matters most

We inform, and support, accelerated change in key sectors that require high levels of raw materials.



### Improve infrastructure

We evidence, and demonstrate, the right infrastructure to keep materials in constant use in Scotland's economy.



### Ailsa Reliability Solutions

Ailsa Reliability Solutions are a multi award winning, purpose driven organisation, with a clear focus on saving clients' money. Their specialist "repair not replace" approach eliminates unplanned disruptions and reduces wasted energy within customers' key and critical processes. They test, monitor, analyse, report and recommend solutions for mechanical and electrical plant assets to maximise their productivity and reduce downtime. This helps keep equipment in high-value use, delivering towards a circular economy by keeping equipment running for longer.





## 6 How will we achieve success?

### **Scottish Water**

Scottish Water has a dedicated programme for circular economy including projects aimed at reusing grit, training employees, and reducing plastic use in laboratories, highlighting its commitment to sustainability, efficient resource use and net zero emissions.



**IndiNature**

IndiNature, based in the Scottish Borders, is combating the 'take, make, waste' approach by producing sustainable construction materials from plants like hemp. Their products, including insulation, blocks, and boards, can be reused and repurposed, significantly reducing waste to landfill and the organisation's carbon footprint, and promoting circular solutions.

## 6.1 Managing and measuring performance

Our Corporate Plan articulates four strategic themes that tackle the systemic barriers inhibiting the economy's ability to change, taking a system wide approach that enables circular strategies to thrive. The outcome of our work to advance these themes is not readily seen in the short-term. Instead, we manage and measure performance according to a 'logic model' that aligns our short-term actions with our strategic priorities and articulates the intermediate and longer-term outcomes we expect to arise from these actions. This is outlined in the pages below, which detail our 14 corporate plan strategic priorities ('We will'), the immediate actions we are taking to progress these within our 24/25 and 25/26 annual plans ('Through') and the intermediate ('Leading to') and longer-term ('Resulting in') outcomes we expect to arise from pursuing our strategic priorities in this way.

The tables below also indicate how the outcomes envisaged by our strategy would be measured. In the majority of cases, these are different to the current metrics used within the National Performance Framework to measure performance in this area. At the heart of our

strategy is a recognition of the broad systemic change required to create a more favourable circular economy ecosystem, creating the conditions in which the development of the circular economy can be easier, faster and more extensive. Therefore, existing metrics and targets such as the recycling rate and food waste are not far-reaching enough to drive and measure the transformation required.

This is recognised by the Scottish Government and will be addressed through the development of the national circular economy strategy, targets and monitoring framework, a process we will support with our evidence and insight.

We also recognise the need to develop measures to gauge our progress in the delivery of a more favourable circular economy ecosystem, and our work over this plan period will help us to devise a new corporate performance framework enabling us to measure the health of the ecosystem and our contribution to its improvement. We will also build upon our national Material Flow Account (MFA) metric to develop sectoral /

segmented MFAs to enable us to measure progress in high-impact territories. Given the current absence of mature circular economy metrics, targets and ecosystem and sectoral indicators against

which our performance can be judged, we will therefore measure our performance to 2030 through the logic model underpinning our corporate plan.

**This will consider:**

- Successful completion of the immediate actions within our 24/25 and 25/26 annual plans to progress our priorities.
- Progress towards intermediate outcomes as targeted by the corporate plan.
- Development of the enhanced measurement framework, including: supporting the Scottish Government's national circular economy strategy, targets and monitoring framework, and developing enhanced measures of the health of the circular economy ecosystem.
- Delivery of our financial and operating plans, over the plan period, to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our resource deployment in support of the strategy.



## Help people care

### We will...

### Initially through...

### Leading to...

### Resulting in...

### Measured by...

Deepen our evidence base into the environmental impact of our overconsumption habits, and broaden this evidence base to include the social and economic value of circular strategies.

Using analysis such as the Scottish Waste Environmental Footprint Tool (SWEFT) to go beyond simply climate change impacts, whilst maintaining the profiling of existing consumption analysis.

Developing enhanced measures of the social and economic value of the circular economy.

Strengthening and expanding our research capability, through partnerships at home and abroad.

Delivery of a significant, and respected, body of evidence, and research, outlining the key impacts and value of the circular economy - environmentally, economically, and socially.

Maintaining, and enhancing, a network of experts to lead, and support, a global approach to the measurement of circular activity across the economy - ensuring Scotland's performance can be tracked against international progress.

Increased policymaker, business and public demand for circular economy solutions to address economic, societal and environmental challenges.

Helping people care is an essential precondition that supports our wider strategic priorities.

Communications reach and behavioural trackers will be used to help us assess our advocacy activities.

Increase our messaging and sharing of evidence to raise awareness of the impact of our consumption while setting pathways to reduce these impacts and address economic and social inequality.

Mapping stakeholders and networks, developing engagement plans, narratives, and collateral to underpin an expansion into new audiences and partnerships.

Working, collaboratively, with partners, stakeholders, and networks to leverage international best practice while guiding innovative approaches to increase mainstream demand for circular solutions.

An expanded network of circular economy ambassadors and leaders across the public, private, third sector and communities fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship and driving impactful change.

Increased societal demand for economic change to reduce over consumption.

Ultimately, however, the measure of success of our advocacy will be seen through decisions that drive change that will be measured through the metrics in our other strategic themes.

Understand and address the barriers to behaviour change through piloting, and evidencing, via public facing campaigns and engagement.

Testing behaviour change interventions to reduce food waste.

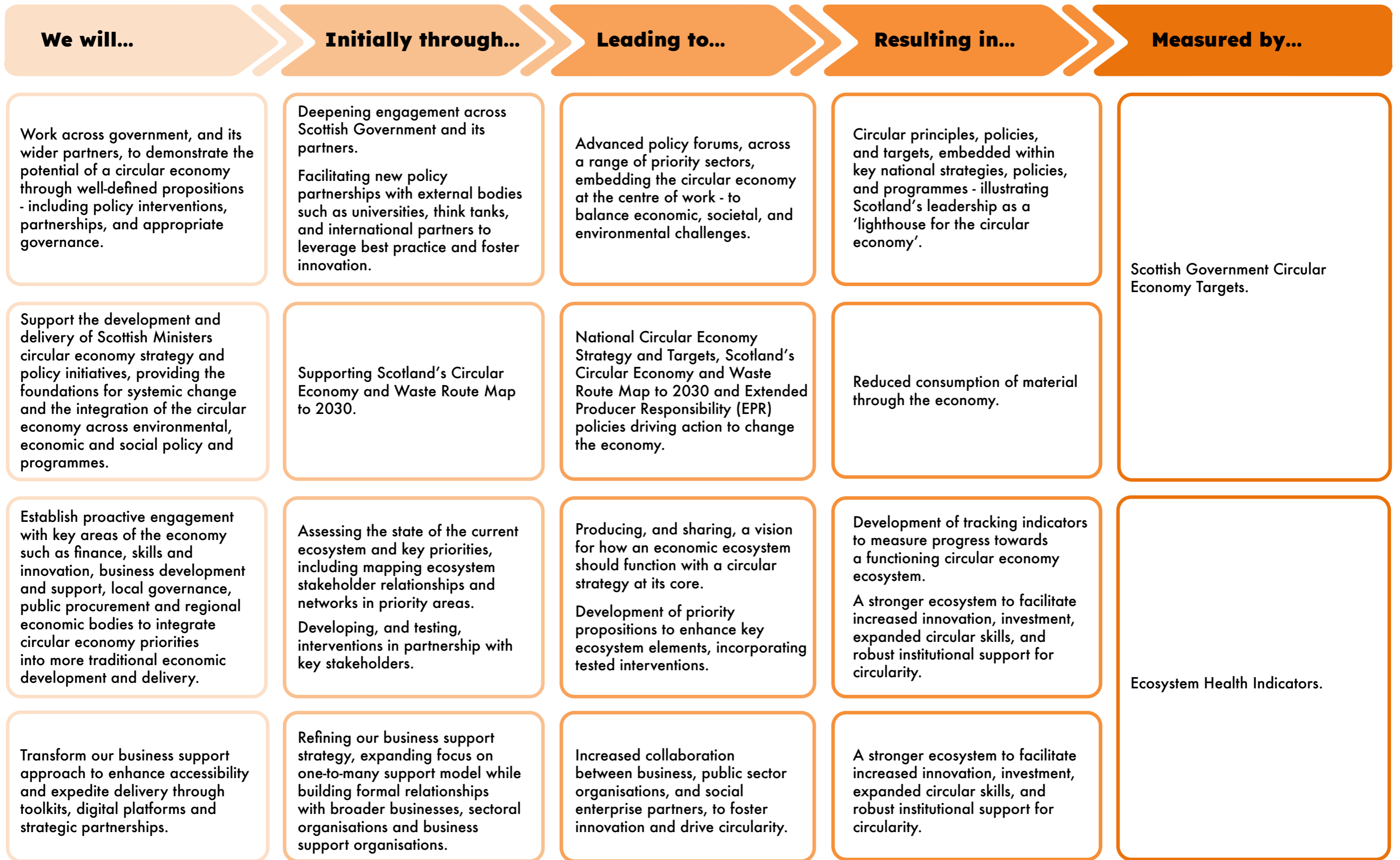
Behaviour change strategies embedded within relevant delivery plans, e.g. Food Intervention Plan within Scotland's Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030.

Targeted behaviour changes, e.g. reduced food waste.

Specific behaviour change targets, e.g. food waste.

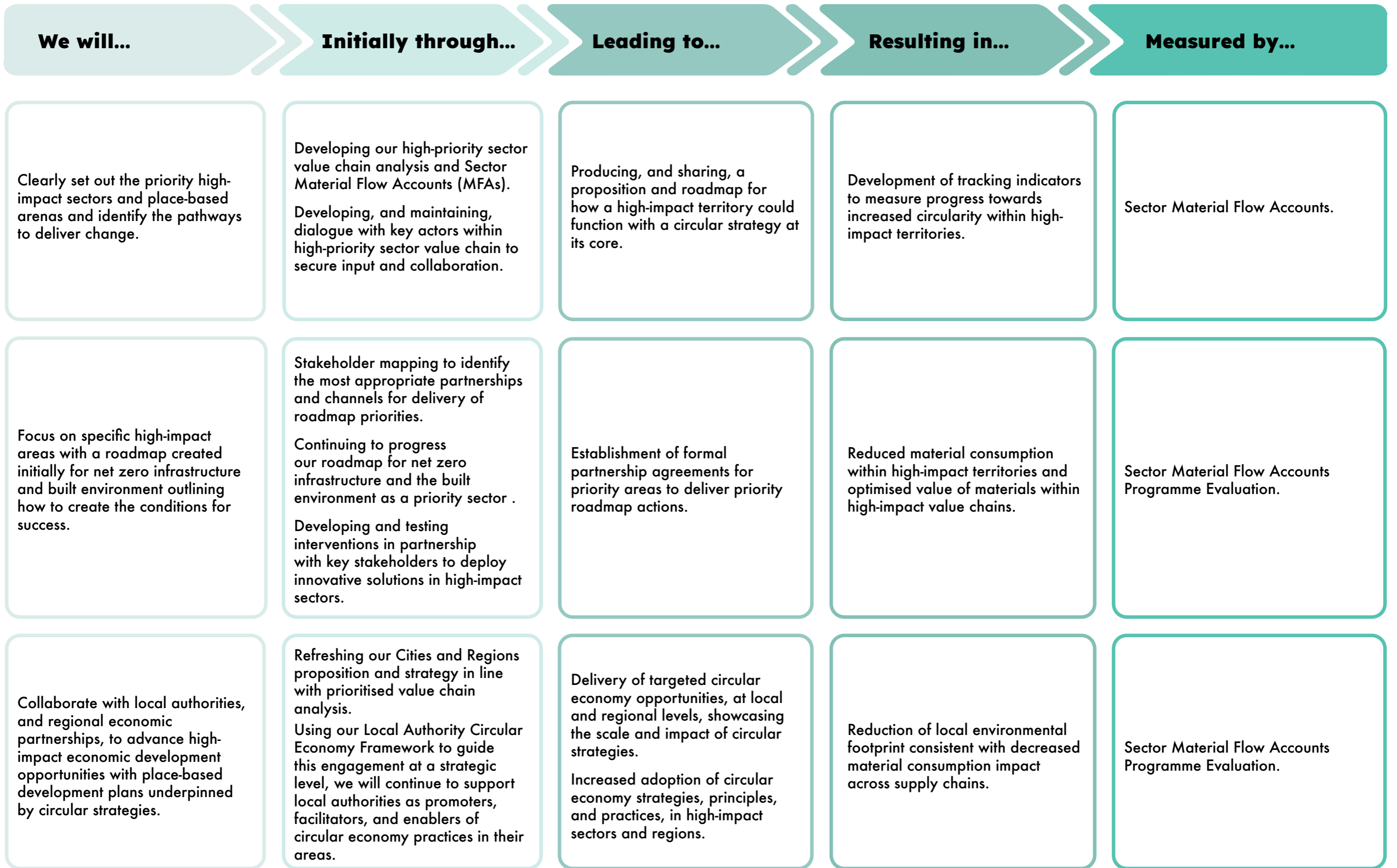


# Make circularity easier



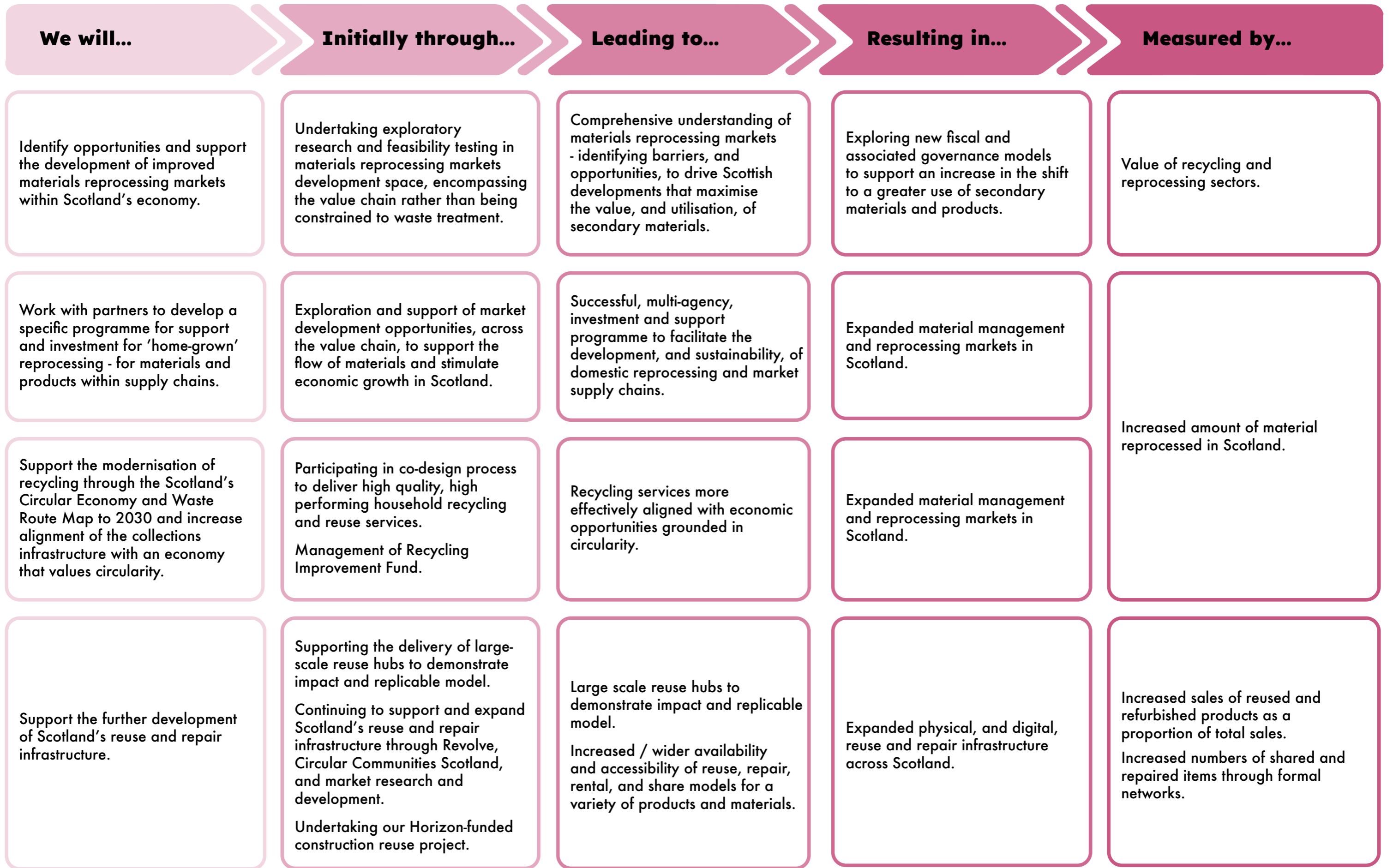


# Do more where it matters most





# Improve infrastructure



## 7 In summary

Given the accelerating climate, biodiversity, and inequality crises, we know we must increase the pace of change. This means being bolder and braver. Our extensive work to date with businesses, local government, people, and communities has shown what is possible.

**Our future focus will harness this collective determination for a better world. With our combined knowledge and expertise, we will empower Scotland to redefine and reshape how we live, conduct business, and contribute to the global economy.**

We'll galvanise partners to embed circular principles as a mainstream approach to delivering sustainable prosperity in Scotland – helping them move beyond the traditional view that the circular economy is simply about managing waste and recycling.

Similarly, we will use digital platforms and associated opportunities to maximise the reach and impact of our evidence and insights – to upskill, educate, and ignite all business and community leaders, workers, and people in a way that will enable local, national, and global benefits of tackling the overconsumption of natural resources for both nature and society.

In addition to allocating more of our expertise to high-impact sectors and regions – particularly where evidence indicates significant potential to generate environmental, social, and economic value through systemic redesign of raw material use - we will focus on optimising the interface between recycling collections and secondary material markets. This approach will enhance accessibility for the reuse, repair, and refurbishment of materials and products.

Zero Waste Scotland is committed to creating real change in Scotland and reducing our contribution to the overconsumption of our planet's finite resources. So, at a time when it is needed most, let us combine our expertise and passion to heal our planet - and create a sustainable future for generations to come.

### 🔍 Plastic: Remaking Our World

In 2022, we embarked on a unique partnership with V&A Dundee to explore our controversial relationship with plastic through an immersive exhibition. Plastic: Remaking Our World was a three-month-long installation at V&A Dundee, looking at both the history and the future of plastic: from its origins as a sustainable alternative to natural resources, to its meteoric rise in the twentieth century and ultimate contribution to pollution in the environment and climate change. To mark the launch, and kickstart the conversation, we popped up plinths in the heart of Glasgow, highlighting how some everyday plastics can last for years and, in some cases, generations.



#### Smell the coffee (2014)

Material: Plastic coffee cup

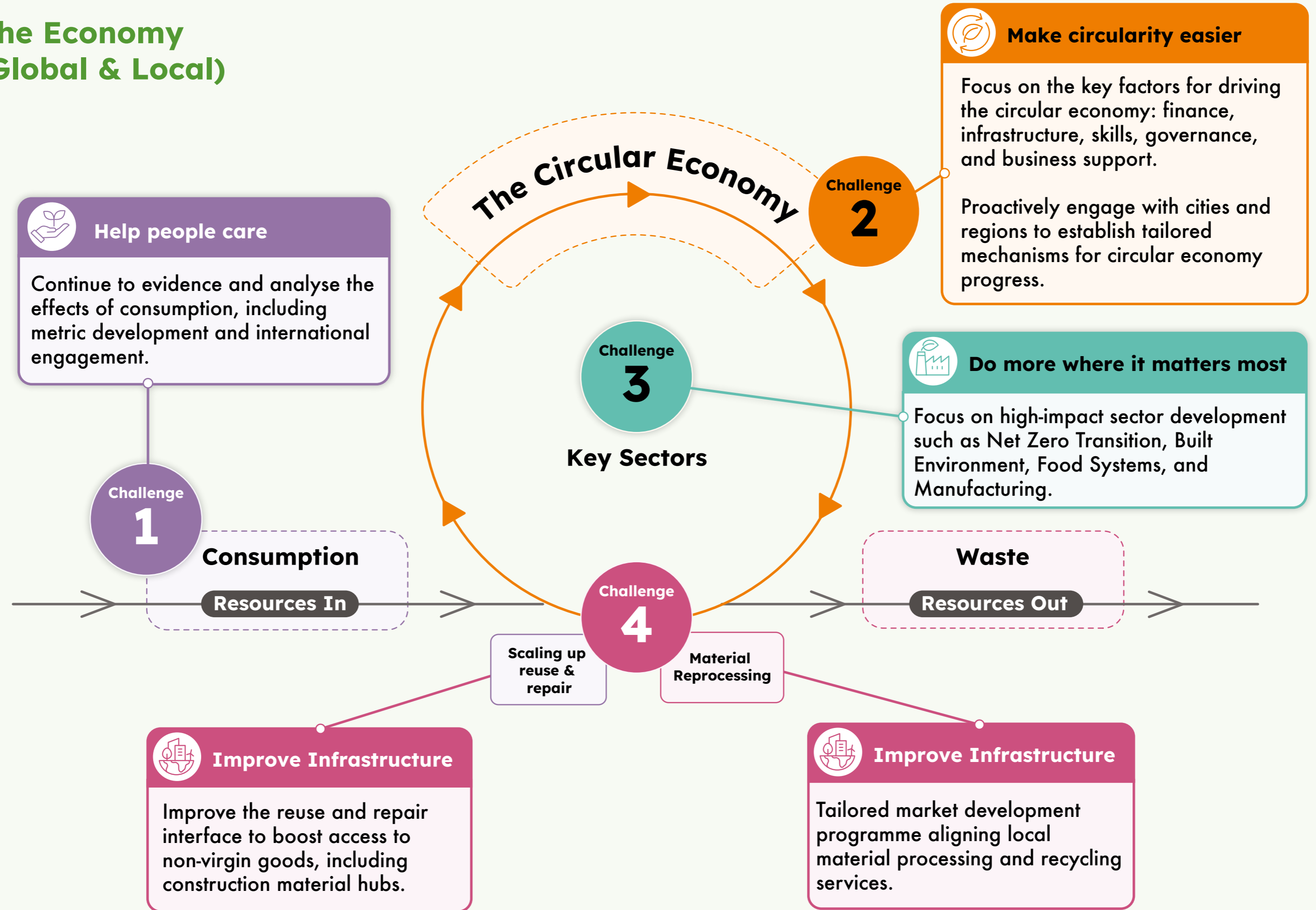
#### Colin Cuppa

This piece was purchased by Colin in 2014. Still in use to this very day, it has been on trains and buses and used in cafes all around Scotland. A very useful and comforting companion on Colin's travels, coffee and sometimes tea, can be found inside.





# The Economy (Global & Local)



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Thanks to Renewable Parts for allowing us the opportunity to capture our cover image.

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